

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in the city!

Agriculture is the growing of plants and crops, and raising animals for food, other human needs or economic gain.¹ **Urban agriculture** is the same, but takes place within or on the edges of an urban setting.

Types of urban agriculture

Despite the density of urban development, there are many opportunities to grow food within city limits. Examples include:



Zfarming (or zero-acreage farming) involves farming in or on urban structures. This is a recent trend that combines food production into urban building design.² Zfarming can take the form of rooftop gardens, edible walls, indoor farms or vertical greenhouses.



Community gardens provide access to private, city- or provincially-owned lands for groups of people wanting to grow their own food and plants.



Small scale farms consist of land within city limits or on the edges of town and cities, owned, rented or leased to farmers. They may be charitable or educational in nature or **urban market gardens**, commercial operations that grow food for sale.



Residents of **private homes** can grow container gardens on balconies, patios or rooftops. They can also have front and/or backyard gardens or greenhouses, participate in **small-scale animal husbandry** (caring for farm animals like chickens or goats in backyards), beekeeping (**apiculture**) or raising fish for food (**aquaculture**).



Controlled environment production³ includes growing food in shipping containers or inside buildings where the growing environment (light, air, water, nutrition) are controlled. This is usually a commercial style of production for growing baby greens and microgreens.

Edible landscaping (foodscaping) uses a variety of edible and medicinal plants and herbs as part of landscaping design both for visual and functional benefits.

Rooftop garden



Rooftop gardens are increasingly common in cities on privately-owned buildings and single-family homes.





Benefits of urban agriculture

Urban agriculture is becoming more common because of the numerous benefits it offers, including:⁴

Access to local, healthy food options, such as fresh fruit and vegetables



The educational potential of connecting with growing and eating within the community

Income generating potential



Improved food knowledge and interest in food

Promotion of physical and mental health, as well as community connections



Support of green spaces within urban environments

Barriers to urban agriculture

Although there may be many opportunities to grow food in cities, there may also be barriers or issues to consider, including:

- zoning by-laws
- lack of food policies and urban planning initiatives
- space limitations, lack of access to uncontaminated and reliable water and land sources
- the effect of water runoff and pests from agricultural activities



Farmer's market

CHALLENGES OF RAISING LIVESTOCK IN CITIES



Your community may have bylaws allowing or prohibiting the raising of livestock in urban settings, which are meant to protect the community from noise pollution, unwanted smells and disease. Raising animals for eggs or meat can attract unwanted guests such as coyotes and rats.⁵



Goat

Urban Ag & the environment

Urban agriculture is a greening initiative because it increases a city's **green space** to help filter pollutants, capture rainwater, build rich soil and create habitats for insects and birds. It can also help decrease urban temperatures by providing shade and absorbing solar rays.⁶

Because urban gardening typically uses nutrient-rich compost to improve soils, it reduces the amount of waste (food scraps, grass clippings, etc.) going to landfills.